(c) whether any agreement in this regard was reached between the two countries; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) During the Indo-US Executive Steering Group Meeting in February 2002, exercises on reciprocal basis have been planned. This covers air borne exercise both in India and in the USA. The modalities of the exercise are yet to be finalized.

Purchase of Russian Factory to make spares for MiG-21

5131. SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Russia has offered to sell to India a factory and all the machinery to make spare parts of MiG-21 fighter aircraft;

(b) if so, whether experts of India and Russia have discussed this issue;

(c) whether the Union Government are taking into consideration the recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee in which they had suggested to phase out the MiG-21 which were of inferior quality; and

(d) if so, to what extent this will be helpful in continuance of MiG-21?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Ministry of Defence has not received any such proposal from Russia.

(c) and (d) MiG-21 Aircraft are airworthy and planned to be exploited till completion of their total technical life. MiG-21 Bis aircraft are being upgraded at Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. in phases. The upgraded MiG-21 Bis aircraft are expected to remain in service till at least 2015.